

# **Cluster School Movement**

**(An Effort to Clarify Concepts, Aims,  
Methodology and Programmes)**

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## CLUSTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

### Preliminary Remarks

**T**HE Cluster School Movement (CSM) has to be seen in the context of the total transformation of society by building people's movement of learning and thus enhancing personal and group power among the deprived sections. Its concept is thus quite different from the usual cluster school and feeder school concepts. Its objective is not merely touching children in formal schools but the entire population in clusters of villages with specific emphasis on the powerless sections.

In keeping with the overall objective of **CSM**, different categories of people are identified (Adults, women, primary school age group children, school dropouts, adolescents and pre-school age children) and through formal and non-formal education an atmosphere of learning is sought to be created. This will not only generate greater awareness in the communities but will build self-confidence and acquisition of skills (social, technical and cultural) in the beneficiaries. It will motivate them to unitedly stand for their rights and for justice, make them creative and progressive, and strive for greater participation in the processes of decision making.

Since the **CSM** is a new and evolving concept of education it needs to be constantly questioned and elaborated both theoretically and practically. The present booklet is an attempt to rethink and reformulate the concept of **CSM**. As our involvement in thirteen clusters grows and new clusters are initiated we will be rethinking relevance and applicability to enable the deprived sections to grow as persons and communities and thus increase their capability to bargain as partners in the total community.





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# CLUSTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

## A PEOPLES MOVEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

**I**N our country even after four decades of educational expansion, only a small minority gets an education worth the name within the means of growth, personal development and upward mobility both economic and social. **"Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective"** brought out by the Ministry of Education (1985) warns us, "If adequate measures are not taken for the spread of education the charm of economic disabilities, regional imbalances and social injustices will widen further, resulting in the building up of disintegrative tensions." It further asserts that, "only education can imbue people with knowledge, the sense of purpose and confidence essential for building a dynamic, vibrant and cohesive nation capable of providing its people with wherewithal for creating better, fuller and more purposeful life."

The deplorable situation of primary education in our country has been well documented in the Draft National Policy on Education. The very fact that 73% of the children do not finish the primary stage (7th or 8th stds) and in spite of the fact that 90% of the villages have primary schools and yet 63% of the population is still illiterate after 40 years of independence proves without a shadow of a doubt that unless new educational structures are created the drop-out rate will continue. If this is the case, quantitatively speaking one could imagine what type of primary education prevails qualitatively when children of four/five classes are huddled together in a single classroom often with the absence of minimum of teaching aids and 62% of the primary schools have one or two teachers. Thus when minimum basic facilities are not available it is difficult to sustain the interest of people in education. Yet only these are available for people.

The fact that, as the present system functions, 144 million of the 192 million (1985-2000 AD) in the 6-14 age group and 500 million illiterates (half the illiterates of the world) will enter the 21st century



without formal elementary education, made us, we at the centre, to reflect upon this grave problem quite seriously. It made us conclude that as things stand, the Government and private agencies will continue to speak of wiping out illiteracy throughout the 21st century instead of working out policies and action programmes relevant and qualitatively better education.

The pattern of relationship between 'haves' and 'have nots' is one of inequality, even in terms of distribution and accessibility of knowledge and it is unlikely that the pattern will change in the near future unless drastic measures are taken. Education and Science are paths to a comprehensive knowledge of the universe. And no individual should be deprived of his right to have this knowledge.

If education is to contribute to the emergence of an equitable social order in our country through social movements, the best possible education must be given to the children of the poor who should be admitted in sufficiently large numbers with good facilities and incentives to ensure that they are properly motivated to cope with the studies. Definitely this is not happening. Let us take stock of Karnataka's position to illustrate how deceptive is the present formal educational system.

Of the 23,514 Lower Primary Schools in the State of Karnataka (as on July 20, 1985) - 16,017 were Single Teacher Schools with a total enrolment of 907,214 pupils which accounts for about 70% of the total enrolment in the State in Lower Primary Schools.

(Source: Educational Statistics of Karnataka, Education Department, 1985).

If deprivation starts to build up at an early age for nearly 70% of Karnataka's children who are enrolled in rural schools (The horrid, miserable situation of those who did not join school at all is not considered) and progressively limits and eventually blocks entry into the mainstream of society, what should be our response? Will such a lopsided educational system bring in social consciousness to the youth? How can our children (our future youth) participate effectively and with personal satisfaction in the enduring



processes of human living? How can we sensitise them to the intolerable disparities of human circumstances, stimulate in them a deep feeling of personal responsibility for remedying the evils they perceive, give them the knowledge and skills necessary for intelligent judgement and action, acquaint them with the difficulties of arriving at truth, inculcate respect for honest differences in opinion, practice in willing co-operative group activity and finally develop in them an unassuming loyalty to social justice?

It is not easy to find an answer to the above questions: However, it is evident that formal education alone will not bring in any changes. Therefore, the seeds of change have to be sown in a variety of ways.

In 1978, we got involved in the **National Adult Education Programme**, to bring about adult literacy and awareness. This was done by organising weaker sections to claim their rights and fight against injustice. There has been a change wherever groups worked, effecting unity among the people of weaker sections in the community, building their self-confidence to claim their rights, but a real movement has not taken off the ground, though the perception of their situation has changed, making them courageous to face reality, in order to change it. Though the number of adult illiterates decreased, because of the futility of the primary schools, number of drop-outs and percentage of children not enrolled has not decreased. That exactly means we are producing more and more adult illiterates in our country. That is why adult education and universalisation of primary education must take place simultaneously. To strengthen the incipient movement of people for participation in policy formation and decision-making, being aware of their rights and claiming what is theirs from the national resources, knowing their problems, taking responsibility and finding solutions unitedly, we need to put new inputs to make it an ongoing process.



## C S M - TOWARDS A DEFINITION

**C**ONSIDERING the **gravity** of the problem the idea of creating an **atmosphere** of learning - of learning to learn - of all people in a cluster of villages within a radius of 7 to 8 Kms. was considered to be a requisite to any action programme. We decided to instil in the people an enthusiasm for learning, teach them skills of reading the various dimensions of their lives and the world around them in order to change their lives and better their environment. It is important to identify and utilise their resources, intellectual and spiritual assets by a dynamic interaction between the old and young, village and village within an entire cluster of villages understanding the value of education, and taking responsibility for it. People must have a decisive voice in the good functioning of the primary school and would even initiate Balwadis so that their children are able to benefit from primary education. This cannot be achieved except by initiating a movement of education.

**Cluster School Movement** can be defined as "peoples movement for education, to build people's power, specially of the deprived sections, to bring about a social change in the existing social structure."

Deprived sections in this context refer to groups such as scavengers, slum dwellers, forest dwellers, fisher folk, traditional artisans, agricultural labourers, urban unorganised labourers, bonded labourers and especially women from these categories. The largest number of these persons belong to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. There are 15% Scheduled Castes and 7.5% Scheduled Tribes in our country, who are victims of cumulative inequalities.

Weaker sections are being marginalised by the present development policies. They are excluded from participating in the planning process. Though they are aware of the inequalities and injustices to which they are subjected, they are not able to fight against the dominating oppressive forces and claim what is theirs in the National resources, for fear of being destroyed completely. **Cluster School Movement** is a social movement by people for people, and is a movement



for education, to create an atmosphere and a culture of learning.

A movement is set in motion by a felt pressing need expressed in symbols and internalised by the masses of people. It leads to perceive a common goal seen as desirable and stirs individuals and groups to achieve it. It galvanises the masses to give this goal a priority, to sacrifice or defer other immediate needs and face inconveniences and trials. It becomes a people's movement to master their lives and their environment, and to transform the relationships between person and person, person and nature, thus setting in motion a new way of perceiving, thinking and acting.

It builds peoples power and leads to new policies, institutions and procedures. In brief, it leads to restructuring society into a more dynamic and just one.

Education is the key factor to build awareness, self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The task facing education for tomorrow is to develop an empathetic sensibility which can bring rational pragmatism into line with cultural traditions, and to adapt a pragmatic approach to the real and present socio-economic demands of people.

Through the process of socialization, from infancy to adulthood, from birth to death people live and grow up within the cultural tradition and social structures of the nation. Education while imparting knowledge and abilities, must ensure to pass on cultural values and attitudes in such a manner as to ensure the future viability of their society while maintaining and continually renewing socio-cultural identity, and to prepare people to contribute actively in shaping the developments in culture and society.

Awakening of such cultural sensibility requires more than an openminded acquisition of skills, knowledge and application of rational logic.

**CSM** believes in the tremendous potential people possess, which can be unfolded, provided a congenial atmosphere is created. People are people to whatever existing creed or caste they belong. Rejection and discrimination of anyone on the basis of groupism reveals the smallness of the one who does it. It



reflects on the existing values of society.

**CSM** aims at providing education, which is sensitive and relevant to the needs of the society. We need to eradicate a system where institutions of education exist as socially detached islands of knowledge. Our hope lies in restructuring education and channels of education with a view to make it socially relevant. The whole learning process is an experience to the student and not merely acquisition of knowledge. Humanising of education is the need of our time.

People must acquire and cultivate the attitude of social awareness and community growth leading to national development. Participation of people at the grass root level is an essential feature of **CSM**. Education, be it formal or non-formal is not only for the growth of the individual but social economic and ethical development and change of a whole community, which in turn facilitates a change in the social structure of the whole nation.

The present educational system is defective because it lays emphasis on acquisition of skills and knowledge without relating them to social needs and it is available only for a small section of our society, making them stronger and stronger. The large masses of people are not taken into consideration. Weaker sections are provided with ill-maintained schools, with inadequate accomodation, like crumbs thrown to the dogs. Universalisation of elementary education, in this kind of an arrangement in the society is only a hypocrisy, with great contradiction between policy and implementation. **CSM** is a movement of people to create an awareness of their rights and obligations, so that they may be able to claim what is theirs from the national resources. They participate and become responsible in the proper functioning of the institutions which serve them. That is why, not a piecemeal but a radical change in the whole structure is imperative, so that the whole community gets involved in the teaching - learning process, by formal and non-formal methods of education. In this way **CSM** is a people's movement and not merely an idea or a programme in the minds of one or two persons.



The focus of the movement of education as explained above are the people and specifically the weaker sections (the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and lower backward classes). It is their participation and involvement that has to be paid special attention. It is they who have to be united, helped to function as a group and to articulate the right type of values and attitudes, and evolve new modes of functioning and being. This implies that the volunteers aim at eliciting the potential of the people and their fullest participation.

It is the weaker sections (70% of the total population) that have to take possession of their heritage, the institutions the services and programmes of the Government meant for their betterment. In CSM, the weaker people take charge of the schools in their villages, participate with the teachers and educational authorities in the education of their children, help in creating better facilities for learning and where no facilities exist, create them and have them recognised by the educational department. Thus CSM differs from the usual cluster school and feeder school approaches.

CSM aims at ensuring a pattern of behaviour in the deprived sections, to claim their rights, starting from educational institutions, all the other public institutions like health, IRDP, etc. These institutions must serve their purpose in their village and maintain the quality of services. The Government and institutions must be accountable to people. Though the State assumes responsibility for being the instrument of equalisation, it has failed in this function. CSM holistic approach to overcome the shortcomings which are inherent in the present system. It takes into consideration various dimensions that shape people's lives.

### AIMS OF CSM

1. To bring out a comprehensive strategy for providing universal primary education with special emphasis on children from deprived sections.
2. To form a community based and decentralised model for the organisation of universal primary education.



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3. To create a people's movement towards a society where dignity of human beings is the first and foremost priority, with no consideration to class, caste, creed, sex and religion.
4. It aims at a cultural revolution to bring about a change in the attitudes, values and thought processes, with a view to set in and accelerate the process of social change, to restructure the society.
5. To bring about necessary changes in the policies of the Government.

### OBJECTIVES OF CSM

1. To strive to provide universal primary education for children in the age group 6 to 16 in selected rural areas.
2. To strive to improve the quality of primary school education in selected areas and to relate it more closely to the life and needs of rural children and to rural transformation.
3. To produce improved educational materials for use in primary schools and to collect and devise improved pedagogical methods.
4. To provide insights for the improved participation of teachers and improving their standards where necessary.
5. By participation, accountability and responsibility, people from the deprived sections may gain control over the institutions which serve them, with a view that institutions must serve their purpose.
6. Towards building and strengthening the power of the weaker sections, so that there may be decentralisation of power, with a view that, their "**silent screams**" may be transformed into powerful voices, so that they may actively participate in the decision making processes.
7. To strengthen the unity among deprived sections and to achieve the desired development collectively through non-formal education.
8. To ward off unfavourable cultural beliefs which have been hindering socio-economic development of people in the rural areas.



9. To foster creativity and critical thinking, in order to find alternatives for effecting and finding solutions to the problems and for initiating constructive programmes by a rational use of their many personal potentials and assets.

## METHODOLOGY

### Place :

The process of the movement is set in a cluster of villages within a radius of 7 to 8 kms. where a voluntary group has already begun an incipient movement of people of the deprived sections, by organising them and supporting them to stand for their rights unitedly and has established rapport in the villages.



Fig. 1: A Cluster of Twelve Villages

When we desire to start the **cluster school movement** in a place where there is no incipient movement or where there is no ground work done, then the group stays in the villages, becomes familiar with people, their way of life and the environment, establishes rapport with the people in the community and together with them makes a social diagnosis of the conditions prevailing in the community. Only then if it is necessary the cluster school movement is started.

The essential features of a cluster are kinship, 'we' feeling and greater mobility between the villages belonging to a single cluster. In Fig.1, diffused boundary shows greater 'mobility' between the villages.

### Process :

As already mentioned above, **Cluster School Movement**



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is introduced in a place where already preliminary work has been done by the voluntary group, and has created an incipient movement of people. **Cluster School Movement** strengthens people rather than diverting their attention. Then a survey is conducted to get an accurate picture of the socio-economic, cultural and educational conditions of people in order to develop systematically strategies for their total development (Details of the survey are given under a separate heading).

### **Mobilisation:**

The voluntary organisation establishes rapport with the people in the villages, in the preliminary stage itself. The voluntary organisation begins the work with the strength of the local people and sustains local efforts, builds local people's power and avoids the risk of making them dependent on the workers of the organisation.

People are sensitized, to the occurrence of openly unjust situations, in the community and in their area linking it to the regional and national level, through non-formal education: thus helping them to critically understand the macro socio-economic organisation, existing political processes and distribution of political power. That is, to create an active awareness and a feeling of revulsion against the inequities and deficiencies of the present system. Thus education here becomes a strong tool of social transformation.

The aim of mobilisation is not only to transform the prevalent values and attitudes and also to evolve new values in the deprived sections, where the existing favour the dominant sections, but also to make these changes operative in life and to lead to relevant social action.

### **Participation :**

A process of education is initiated to assist the most **under privileged** sections, to have a better understanding of their situation, their strength and weakness. The action groups at the grass root level are formed from the people themselves. The animators provide support and elicit relevant actions from the people to ensure their maximum participation, in



the issues concerning themselves, their community, in terms of decision making and problem solving, adopting a holistic approach for their development to bring about necessary changes in the community.

### **Accountability :**

Basically accountability is aimed at ensuring that institutions, which are meant for the service of the people, function adequately, while maintaining the quality of their services and help people to grow to the fullest of their capacity. That is why in **CSM** it is the community that is people of the weaker sections who take charge of the institutions meant for their service.

### **People's Power :**

Mobilisation, participation and accountability are expected to lead to people's power. That is, an awareness of their organised power, which manifests itself, in their ability to decide for themselves, to fight against social injustice inflicted upon them. This makes them aware of their tremendous potential within them and to make use of the environmental resources towards building a new humanity.

### **Learning to Learn :**

The process of gaining people's power capacitates them to have self-confidence, and increased self-respect enabling them to have a better self-image of themselves as a group and a higher aspirational level for achievement. This process facilitates to have an atmosphere of mutual respect, freedom to exchange ideas, spontaneous participation and a readiness to engage in a teaching-learning process. This is a growth experience for children and adults and education becomes a tool to transform society.

In this atmosphere people unitedly have a conscious common purpose to learn, which raises their motivational level to learn and creates a common interest in the welfare of the whole community. In other words, an interest is generated in the development of the deprived sections in the society, creating a need to contact knowledgeable persons to acquire skills and



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abilities. Clarity of conditions and procedures as to what is to be accomplished, when and why. Then an open-mind for appraisal of their own actions.

Selection and focus upon areas of learning depends upon the needs of the people, setting realistic goals in terms of people's potentials. Instead of waiting for opportunities, they may be created in the community. Examples of demonstration schemes, which serve as models for people to inculcate and acquire competency and skills are necessary.

### **Strengthening People's Organisation :**

As mentioned earlier **CSM** aims to strengthen people's organisation. In this process they are helped to help themselves to be independent and free, to help them to grow. This also involves a process of weaning the people away from the voluntary organisation which supports them.

### **A Continuous Process :**

The effectiveness of **CSM** can be understood by its radiating effect on the clusters of villages which are near to the selected areas, triggering a chain reaction making it an ongoing process.

### **Evaluation :**

An evaluation is a judgement based on clearly specified realistic and achievable criteria reflecting the goals of the project. It is job related and time limited. It is concerned with both the quality of performance and the quantity of accomplishment.

To facilitate the process of evaluation, a written record is maintained about the educational, health, cultural and socio-economic conditions prevailing in the villages wherever the movement is launched. Wherever it is possible the initial conditions are also recorded by films and slide shows.

Evaluation is a continuous process rather than an occasional event. That is why continuously maintaining record of the progress of the movement is emphasised. Field notes and discussion with the beneficiaries are important tools for assessment. Field notes as cumulative data over a period of time help to safeguard the



objectivity of the evaluation as means of determining present and potential growth.

The voluntary organisation analyses the approaches it adopts from time to time to see whether they really touch the root cause of underdevelopment in the community.

The evaluation should review both strengths and weaknesses, growth and stagnation. Each evaluation is tentative, giving new insights and determining the course of action.

## B A L W A D I S

**C**ONCRETISATION of the educational movement, so that this movement may find expression in the life of each and every person and in the institutions of the community, specially the weaker sections. The focal point of this movement finds expression in the awareness, motivation, concern and determination of people to see that their children in the community, all without exception, undergo primary education and the quality of this education is improved through innovative methods. To realise this objective there is a need of building the personality of the child before the primary stage. The preparatory phase must help him/her to have self-confidence, to gain mastery of the surrounding environment, helping him/her in acquiring social skills and a motivation to learn.

This is done through well established nurseries in every village/habitation and if necessary in hamlets. Nurseries will not be started where they do exist and a need for them is felt by the people of the community. It is only through participation and co-operation of people that nurseries are initiated and to some extent subsidised. The teachers for the nurseries will be selected from the village/habitation itself and will be trained with a continuous ongoing formation. In the beginning stages, the nurseries will be started in public places, private houses or even under a tree; but as the people realise the importance of nursery education for their children, they should be motivated to assign a proper place with sufficient ground to play and a pakka building must be constructed. An ideal nursery with proper infrastructure, teaching aids and environment are created



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for the healthy development of the child. Thought could be given to the nutrition aspect of the child in consultation with the parents. May be a permanent asset in the village could be created for the maintenance and running of the nursery.

Once the Balwadies are established, the Government should be forced to acknowledge them by giving aid in some way or the other. Seeing the emerging new balwadies the people in the villages, where already balwadies exist will be motivated to take responsibility for their maintenance and supervision. Care must be taken to establish good relation with educational authorities and teachers. The Sanghas responsible for the balwadies will have their representatives meet from time to time to discuss problems and matters concerning the balwadis. The exchange of information as to how balwadis are run in their respective villages will give impetus to improve them in their villages or seek remedial action where necessary. The coming together of sangams representatives will foster creating a **people's movement**.

To sum up, the following are the aims of the movement:

1. To see that every child between the age group of 3-6 years is in the pre-school to develop self-confidence.
2. To help acquire social and learning skills that will be conducive not only to enter primary school but to go through it fruitfully.
3. To have a stimulating environmental pedagogy that will rouse the curiosity of the child, acquire the habit of team work, concentration and both physical and mental ability.
4. To make the people specially of the weaker sections take responsibility in maintaining and supervision of the balwadi.
5. To make the government acknowledge the balwadies and provide necessary subsidy to make them effective.
6. To make the educational department effective. parents and teachers should be partners in the process of education.



Key to universalisation of primary education is :

1. Creating a cultural mutation vis-a-vis learning as a high value.
2. Motivation of parents.
3. Stimulating pre-school education specially for the weaker sections.
4. If every child from the weaker sections undergoes pre-school training they will naturally go to primary school. Now the physical structures of primary schools can accomodate only half the number of children of a village and so the Government through the pressure of parents will be forced to create a new physical structure. Within two years time the number of one teacher schools will diminish considerably and better education will be available to children.

### PRIMARY EDUCATION

The proximate goal of CSM is primary education (4+3 in Karnataka) because it is the minimum required to trigger a process of further learning in an individual and necessary to enter a modern world of science and technology and to grasp the relationships and mechanisms of a complex society. Unless serious attempts are made to obtain universal primary education among the deprived sections the present unjust dual system will be perpetuated. They will be denied the right of entering the mainstream of the country and thus will not have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. What has to be noted is that without at least 4 years of primary education children will soon lapse into illiteracy.

The present physical facilities of lower primary schools are meant to accomodate 60% of the children in a village and so are inadequate to take in all children. Children of 4 classes in one small room just cannot be handled by one teacher and out of sheer boredom 50% of the children will drop out. The futulity of a hopeless education make the poor parents prefer to send their children for some odd jobs rather than to schools. Whatever is spent on primary education thus becomes wasteful. This situation can



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be changed only if the parents see the education of their children as a high priority value and are motivated to play a definite role in changing the physical and decision making structures of education. There should evolve a participatory process between the parents, teachers and educational department. CSM precisely tries to effect this triple linkage and thus makes primary education a centre piece of education and the movement for learning.

Two or three models of primary schools with adequate physical facilities will be created in a cluster of villages with the co-operation of the village Sangams so that other village people clamour for similar necessary facilities. Additional teacher/s will be appointed and the Government asked to take them into service. Thus a congenial atmosphere for teaching/learning will be created.

There are many other things like teaching aids, new pedagogy etc., needed to make primary education effective. Methods and principles of Gandhiji's "Basic School Model" could offer many ideas to introduce innovative approaches and methods in primary education.

### NFE - for Primary School Dropouts

Not more than 25-30% of the children in the age group of 10-14 years are in higher primary schools in Karnataka. What happens to the 75%? Unless remedial action is taken in an imaginative way they will remain illiterates or will possess literacy that will not allow them to extend their knowledge acquire functional skills, and intelligently participate in creating a new rational and just society. Their choice of work will be restricted to a few manual jobs and thus keep them dependent on landlords hampering any upward social mobility. Quite a few of them will be a liability to society and a potential for unrest.

A massive plan needs to be chalked out and diligently executed to tackle the problem of dropouts. But who is to initiate this programme? Although the Government is well aware of the desperate situation of school dropouts it does not have the will to meet it squarely. It is again the deprived sections who have to take the initiative because it most affects their children and consequently an amelioration of the



weaker groups in the coming generation. This enormous task can be executed by the determined efforts of the people only if the entire community is gripped by the absolute need of education for a meaningful social change.

The **CSM** will strive to organise **NFE** in the villages and see that local animators are trained to teach, evolve relevant teaching material, aids and pedagogical methods. It will use time convenient for the dropouts, for most of them will be working during the day. The method of 'learning through doing' through games, cultural activities, local and low cost media, skill training and projects of 'earning while learning' will have to be carefully devised and implemented wherever it is possible. Some of the cleverer dropouts will be helped by the NFE programme to join regular classes in the formal system. A close contact with Government departments and agencies is a must for the success of this programme.

### **Adult Education**

**CSM** aims at creating a movement of critical learning in rural areas and so it identifies different categories of people in a community and according to their situation designs alphabetical and functional literacy classes. Adult illiterates are an important category because on the success of raising the consciousness of reality around them and of building unity of purpose and action the movement of education will depend. Ours is a holistic approach and unless the whole person and the entire community enters enthusiastically the process of learning leading to concrete action for change the various inputs of formal and non-formal education will not bear fruit.

It is therefore that **CSM** intends to cover all the adults of the age group of 16-35 years into the literacy and numeracy drive within a fixed time-bound programme of 12-18 months. For this animators will be trained but above all an opinion created that adults have to learn from children and vice-versa. Everybody teaches everybody else and so does everybody learn from everybody else; we are all learners and teachers. This attitude of mind has to permeate the family so that every house becomes a school of learning and teaching.



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The problem-solving pedagogy to be adopted in the literacy classes will go a long way in inculcating a scientific (rational and systematic) spirit in deprived sections who are generally illiterate. It will develop their imagination, critical thinking and develop their power of discovering alternatives individually and collectively. Techniques of group interaction will facilitate the strengthening of sangams and surface leaders dedicated to the cause of their deprived brethren. Learning has relevance only if it transforms the traditional thought patterns, evolves new progressive secular and human values and leads to transforming action for change which will unite and strengthen the power of the weaker people and improve the quality of their lives. It is hoped that the new literates will be empowered to enter the mainstream of rural life with greater confidence and as partners in a socialistic, democratic and secular society.

To sustain the interest of illiterate adults is not an easy task. This will demand continual cultural inputs, creation of non-threatening atmosphere in the class through innovative methods.

### Vocational Education

More reading and writing will neither build the personality of the school children and the dropouts nor make them creative to develop their potentialities and rationally utilise their meagre material resources nor make them search for economically viable alternatives to better their lives. It is by introducing a variety of skills needed and desirable in rural areas that the people will be enthused to make their labour more productive. It will not only develop the personality of every adolescent but also give him/her bargaining power and a sense of legitimate pride of being able to contribute towards effecting positive change in the environment and the growth of the community.

For this purpose, the local skills will be identified, new skills needed in rural areas listed and innovative ways of developing them will be devised. The cooperation of the Government, voluntary agencies and private enterprises will be sought. Our target groups for vocational training will be the deprived sections,



school dropouts and adolescents. In the primary schools too the concept of '**Basic Education**' of Gandhi will be implemented through the method of '**Learning by Doing**'.

At the moment the centre for **Non-Formal & Continuing Education (NF-CE)** is collecting literature and data on vocational training and identifying Government and voluntary skill training programmes and persons with skills willing to share their expertise with the deprived people.

### **Cultural Activities**

No programmes for the enhancing of the power of the deprived sections will succeed unless their mind set and ethos are transformed. Their beliefs, values and attitudes are imposed on them through subtle ways by the dominant groups. Their goals in life and motivation for achievement are moulded by the interests and prejudices of the powerful. Their thinking patterns are routinised in set grooves and their spirit dampened to accept with resignation the actual situation as inevitable. To change this situation by creating an atmosphere of learning calls for a heavy, multi-dimensional cultural input.

The culture of people could be summed up as the basic pattern that emerges from certain beliefs, ideas, values, attitudes, traditions and customs and is expressed through symbols. It implies a perspective of the world and the organisation of society, validates it and so makes the participants interiorise and accepts its consequences through religious and social sanctions. The cultural activities will not only attend to artistic forms of expression but also to the new perspective of the world and the society which people are called on to transform into a habitat in which the uniqueness of every person could find acceptance and the possibility of developing for the good of the entire human community. A debate on certain fundamental beliefs and values should be an ongoing process in cultural activities so that in the consciousness of the entire community certain basic beliefs and common values surface.

The forms of cultural activities will be firmly based on local cultural forms and other forms introduced



from outside will have the fullest participation of the communities in the cluster. It is only when people have acquired a mastery over cultural forms that they will be able to express their deepest dreams, aspirations as well as difficulties and contradictions.

### **Role of Survey in CSM**

Social survey is a method of social introspection, to gain systematic and accurate knowledge of the social conditions of people in a particular area. It is concerned with the formulation of a constructive programme for the development of the community and amelioration of current social conditions that are dysfunctional in nature. These conditions can be measured and compared with situations which can be accepted as a model.

Presently in the village clusters where already there is an incipient movement of people, where they are organised and there is a greater degree of awareness, through non-formal education, our groups are conducting a survey to get a reliable understanding of the health, education and socio-economic conditions of the communities in the cluster. Local people are trained and involved in the process of collecting data to ensure participation at the grass root level, in the matter concerning themselves in all walks of life.

### **Role of Social Research**

Social research is a method of studying, analysing and conceptualising social life, in order to extend and verify knowledge. It is a scientific undertaking which by means of logical and systematised methods aims to re'search' the truth. It attempts to discover new facts or verify old facts and to analyse their sequences, inter-relationships, causal explanations and the natural laws which govern them.

Traditionally the objective and value-free nature of social research is taken for granted by the social scientists. Social situations are seldom simple though appear simple. It is a major psychological feat to achieve the objectivity required for scientific inquiry. However, it is a good academic exercise and the importance of which is not underestimated. But how



far can one be objective when one is an outsider to a community? Can one get fully into the ethos of a society by being an outsider?

We adopt conscientizing research in this context with a belief in the great potential and strength of the deprived sections for transformation. We initiate and facilitate a process to discover themselves, their rights and duties, needs and world views, so that they become their own saviours.

Before initiating the process the researcher must know the socio-ecological setting of the community. He inserts her/himself into the socio-cultural milieu of the place. The diagnosis of the problems of the community is done with the people of the community. Conscientizing research starts at the grass root level and is oriented towards achieving a deeper and a more organized form of commitment and action which leads to the liberation of oppressed, suppressed and alienated social groups and classes who have a right to be the subjects of the Nation and not merely objects to be exploited.

### **Role of Professionals**

**CSM** aims at a holistic approach for development. We are involving specialists from various fields like education, natural sciences and social sciences to give their best to the people in the clusters, in terms of developing new pedagogies, making use of the local available environmental resources and training of local people, helping them to acquire knowledge and new skills to deal effectively with the problems and potentials in the community in view of restructuring the community. For the **CSM** to be an effective instrument to build people's movements and power there is need of much research, reflection and production of literature. We have listed some areas of research and production of literature. We would **welcome people** with commitment and competence to join us on a voluntary, part-time or full-time basis.

1. Research Methodology.
2. Educational and socio-economic surveys of clusters of villagers.
3. Health status of clusters.

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## Cluster School movement

4. Cluster School and social change.
5. Social structure and development.
6. Development and political power.
7. Failure of the programmes of community development of 1950s.
8. An Anatomy of rural deprivation.
9. Basic education - A Gandhian concept.
10. Gap between the urban and rural areas - Causes and Remedies.
11. Scientific Temper and change in rural India.
12. The Political dimension of CSM.
13. A new syllabus for rural schools.
14. Manual for training Balwadi Teachers.
15. Training Manual for Animators.
16. Value content of Adult, Education, Literature and Pedagogy.
17. Techniques of forming, sustaining and strengthening village Sangams.
18. Folk stories.
19. Rhymes for Nurseries.
20. Learning through doing - Case study.
21. Leadership training for the leaders of the Sangams.
22. Theory and Practice of Yoga for Rural People.
23. A Handbook of the Development of Child.
24. Goal setting and Problem Solving - Case study.
25. New strategy for vocational training for rural youth.
26. Pedagogy of Adult Education.
27. Street Theatre and Puppetry.
28. Effective communication and use of low cost media.
29. Evaluation.
30. Study of Teacher Training Schools in Karnataka.







**'CLUSTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT** is a People's Movement for Education, to Build People's Power, Specially of the Deprived Sections, to Bring about a Social Change in the Existing Social Structure.'

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